DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 064 617 AC 012 714

AUTHOR Brownell, Joseph C.
TITLE A Study of Urban 4-H Club Programs in Thirty Cities of the United States.
PUB DATE [71]
NOTE 13p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Disadvantaged Youth; Extension Agents; Extension Education; Field Studies; Financial Support; *Urban Extension; *Urban Youth; *Youth Clubs; *Youth Programs
IDENTIFIERS Albany Oregon; California; Chicago; Cooperative Extension Service; Four H Clubs; Las Vegas; Minneapolis; Orlando; Portland; St Paul; Trenton

ABSTRACT

This report covers a six-month sabbatical travel study of urban 4-H programs in 30 United States cities. The purpose of the study was to search for 4-H programs and methods which were being used successfully with urban boys and which might be adapted for use in other urban situations. Interviews with professional 4-H personnel, aides, and leaders of other youth organizations were subjective in nature. Many instances were found where individual agents were making a strong effort to provide innovative programs, but most of them reflected local conditions so strongly that they could not be readily transposed to another situation. However, eight programs with wider possibilities were discovered. It was found that relatively little commitment has been made to urban 4-H programs by Cooperative Extension, and that a regularly funded program is necessary to gain the confidence of people and to attract leaders. (CL)

ED 064617

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

A STUDY of URBAN 4-H CLUB PROGRAMS

in Thirty Cities

of the United States

September, 1970 - March, 1971

Joseph C. Brownell

AC 012 714

Acknowledgements

The author is indebted to the many 4-H agents who willingly gave of their time and energy to tell about the local 4-H programs. Everyone was extremely helpful. The Cooperative Extension Service is fortunate to have such an excellent group of capable and dedicated agents. This is one of the strengths of the 4-H program.

Thanks are also due to the Cooperative Extension Association of Monroe County and the New York State Extension Service for making the sabbatical leave possible. The other members of the county 4-H staff deserve thanks for carrying the extra load for six months.

The following Extension staff members were particularly helpful:

A. Douglas Aulenbacher, Bernice Belshaw, Dr. Lawrence Biever, Francis Calderwood, Mrs. Ceretha Cartwright, Mrs. Rena Chilcott, Ernest Cowen, Robert Davis, James DeBose, Alfred Duncan, Joseph Fox, Albert Grayson, Julius Hall, John Hassert, Ed Hooks, James Johnston, Richard Krueger, T. O. Larson, Andrew Levey, George Mansell, Peter Martens, Mrs. Ruth Martin, Mrs. Marydean Mitchell, Mrs. Linda Nierman, Albert Pell, Franklin Perry, James Rice, Dr. R. J. Ruthemeyer, Dean Schank, Wayne Shull, Bruce Smalley, Carl Smith, Alan Snider, Joel Soobitsky, Millicent Steinhauer, Gary Stone, Frank Stowe, Gray Thompson, Nellie Van Calcar.

This report covers a six-month sabbatical travel study of urban 4-H programs in thirty cities of the United States. The study was made between September 16, 1970, and March 15, 1971 and included cities in New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Texas, Florida and the District of Columbia.

The cities visited were selected from suggestions made by State 4-H Club Leaders, members of the Federal Extension staff and other 4-H agents.

The purpose of the study was to search for 4-H programs and methods which were being used successfully with urban boys and which might be adapted for use in other urban situations, particularly the author's home county of Monroe in New York State.

Interviews ranged from a half-day to three days in length and were subjective in nature. Most of the discussions were with professional 4-H personnel, but some were with 4-H aides and leaders and with leaders of other youth organizations.

The author is the 4-H Division Leader (Cooperative Extension Agent) in Monroe County, New York. Headquarters are in the City of Rochester which has a population of 300,000 people. An additional 400,000 persons live in the county outside of the city. Most of these live in dense urban and suburban areas contiguous to the city. Monroe County has carried on an organized 4-H program in the inner-city area of Rochester for approximately six years. The author has been in his present position for eighteen years.

For the purpose of this study, an urban area was considered to be one with a dense population, with restrictions which would rule out all livestock except pets, and where large gardens would be a rarity.

While the original intent was to study only urban (city) programs, as contrasted to suburban area programs, this soon proved to be impractical. Urban 4-H programs in middle income areas generally were little different from those in suburban, less densely populated areas. In most cases, it was possible to differentiate inner-city programs from the balance of the 4-H program in the area.

As a result, the greatest attention was given to 4-H programs in low-income, inner-city areas with less attention to the total 4-H program and organization in the county. Special consideration was given to programs involving or designed for boys whenever these could be found.

The author found many instances where individual agents were making a strong effort to provide special and innovative programs for urban youth. Many of the programs were excellent but reflected the local conditions so strongly that transposing them to another situation would be almost impossible.

The author has listed below those programs which seemed to have greater possibilities for wider use and to be of general interest. *

1. Orlando, Florida has a three session course to teach and certify boys for employment in lawn and shrub care. This is taught by Extension agents and the Extension Office acts somewhat in the role of an employment agency. The program is entering its third year.

2. Trenton, New Jersey is using Expanded Nutrition aides directly as leaders of 4-H Clubs to further the nutrition educational program. Those involved believe it to be beneficial to both programs.

3. Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota have extensive programs using 4-H materials in special education classes in schools. Both also have a creative arts project and a pet project. The latter has now been adopted as a state project.

4. Portland, Oregon conducts a Spring Skills Day for boys which provides opportunities for area-wide participation and competition. Oregon has an Outdoorsman project which has appeal as a beginning conservation project for boys.

* Addresses listed at end of study

5. Albany, Oregon has a number of 4-H Clubs for mentally retarded boys and girls. The county junior leader club conducted a weekend camp for thirty-five mentally retarded persons. Agents are working closely with a local Boys Club of America with two to three hundred boys taking part in some phase of 4-H.

6. California has developed a Community Pride program for use by local clubs which encourages clubs to improve their neighborhoods.

7. Las Vegas, Nevada had a Community Pride program conducted in and through high schools in the area. The Extension agent operated as a youth agent. Many youth organizations, including 4-H Clubs, were represented on the planning group.

8. Chicago, Illinois gives importance to club officer training and junior leader training by conducting such meetings in well-known downtown hotels. This has the added advantage of giving a new experience to many of the participants.

The author visited thirty cities with thirty different 4-H programs. Most of these were unique and were not readily transferable to other situations. However, on the basis of these visits, certain general impressions became apparent.

1. The majority of agents and other staff members interviewed felt that the use of the 4-H name and emblem was positive and constructive with youth up to teenage level. From the age of thirteen on, it would appear that no national youth affiliation has general appeal unless a strong allegiance has already been established.

2. The needs of urban boys were most often expressed in terms of developing a self-identity, developing self-confidence, changing attitudes, learning to work with others and learning to adapt to the world. These needs, together with the need for a positive male image, are particularly acute for urban boys in low-income and minority groups.

3. Professionals in the 4-H program are inconsistent in their attitude toward the value and place of the organized local 4-H Club. Agents are generally agreed on the basic needs of boys and girls and that the club method with an adult leader is the most effective means of accomplishing these goals. However, in describing their local programs, agents more often emphasized the short-term, mass-audience type of program which they were conducting.

4. Most of the innovative programs which were noted appear to be a function of the county or local staff, occasionally with acquiescence of the state staff.

5. There appear to be no programs for urban 4-H boys which can be recommended as applicable to a variety of situations or which could be expected to have wide general use. Most programs show a ratio of from two to four girls for every boy. Concern is being expressed on many levels that 4-H may drift into what would be basically a girls' organization.

6. Comparatively little commitment has been made to urban 4-H programs by Cooperative Extension. While most of this commitment has been to low-income areas and audiences, it is largely verbal with relatively little financial backing. The commitment in terms of money is almost token in scope compared to that for other types of youth programs, compared to the needs of the community, or to almost any other measure one might care to use.

7. The number of men volunteer leaders in low-income areas is, with few exceptions, almost non-existent. Most of the leadership for 4-H Clubs in low-income areas is by persons who are paid by Cooperative Extension or other agencies. The principle of paid leadership is not, however, generally accepted publicly by Cooperative Extension staff members or administrators.

8. Those areas which have a relatively large number of volunteer leaders are the areas which have a relatively stable funding source, usually local. These areas also have relatively little staff turn-over, have tended to concentrate much of their effort on the club structure, and have not enrolled vast numbers of youth under the 4-H banner. It would appear that a regularly funded 4-H program with continuity and regularity over a period of years is necessary to generate the confidence of people and demonstrate the permanence of the 4-H program needed to encourage volunteer leadership.

9. The use of special short-range funds from federal, state or private sources does not have the desired long range benefits. Low-income audiences in urban areas are becoming inured to the appeals of special short-range programs. In some cases, there has been a tendency to put 4-H in the same category with other "crash" programs, often federally funded, programs which don't last and about which many low-income people are becoming highly suspicious. The insecurity which such programs develop in the 4-H staff is detrimental to morale. Staff turn-over can often mean that new incoming staff members must go through the same processes and experiences and learn by committing the same errors as their predecessors.

Cooperative Extension has not yet determined that the 4-H program serves a vital purpose and is worth expanding strongly in urban areas. The author found that, in spite of statements by leaders in Cooperative Extension expressing support for urban 4-H programs, money for such programs is not generally available to local Extension personnel. At present, there is no indication that a strong effort is being made to provide such funds. The fact that Cooperative Extension is not a national program or organization, but rather fifty separate, autonomous programs makes a national program almost impossible.

Several ideas have been gained from this study which will be given consideration in the Monroe County 4-H program. Two of these are the addition of boys' skill days and giving more stature to teen-age participation. An emphasis on teen-age activity and responsibility was noted particularly in the Chicago program. This will be implemented in Monroe County by giving older 4-H members a greater voice in county program planning and by establishing a teen planning council. Plans are currently being made to incorporate boys' skill days in the yearly program.

This study has convinced the author that the local 4-H Club is the backbone of the 4-H youth development phase of Cooperative Extension. Short term programs of three or four sessions can teach a particular mechanical skill or piece of information. It requires more time to help youth make substantial changes in attitudes and habits, to help youth develop self-confidence, a sense of self-worth, and an understanding of how to get along with others. These are the pressing needs of young people today which 4-H has demonstrated can be met through the local 4-H Club method.

Increased emphasis will be placed on the development of local 4-H Clubs in Monroe County.

Monroe County has some 4-H materials which are currently being used by special education classes in schools. However, no emphasis has been given to this phase of 4-H and it will be given consideration in planning the program for coming years.

The author did not visit Nassau County in New York State on this trip. However, he has been somewhat familiar with the general aspects of this county and its program and has visited there on previous occasions. One aspect of the Nassau County program which is already being implemented in a small informal way in Monroe County is the formation of Boys' Leader Councils. Nassau County is a leader in many areas of urban 4-H work and has developed councils of leaders of boys' clubs on a district or area basis. The leaders of these clubs have the common bond of boys in addition to that of 4-H. This has been helpful in providing support among the leaders and for exchanging ideas and activities among leaders with common problems. It is the author's hope that a boys' leader council can become an effective part of the Monroe County 4-H program.

One value of any sabbatical leave is the opportunity to get away from the immediate problems of the job and gain a better perspective of the total situation. The author is particularly cognizant of this benefit and of the chance provided to exchange ideas with many dedicated and talented professional 4-H youth agents throughout the country. In fact, this is the most important benefit gained from the study leave and has enabled the author to return to work with renewed enthusiasm.

Addresses of offices referred to in text:

1. Ernest H. Cowen
   2350 E. Michigan Avenue
   Orlando, Florida 32806

2. Mr. James Rice, 4-H Agent
   Court House
   Trenton, New Jersey 08607

3. Mr. Joseph L. Fox
   Extension Agent
   2020 White Bear Avenue
   St. Paul, Minnesota 55109

4. Mr. Gray Thompson
   Cooperative Extension Agent
   2033 N. W. Glisan Street
   Portland, Oregon 97209

5. Mr. Wayne Shull
   Cooperative Extension Agent
   P. O. Box 765
   Albany, Oregon 97321

6. Mr. A. D. Aulenbacher
   4-H Club Specialist
   University of California
   College of Agriculture
   Riverside, California 92502

7. Mr. Dean Schank
   Cooperative Extension Agent
   300 Las Vegas
   Las Vegas, Nevada 89101

8. Dr. Lawrence Biever
   1642 W. 47th Street
   Chicago, Illinois 60609

Author's address 249 Highland Avenue
Rochester, New York 14620

ERIC Clearinghouse
JUL 2 8 1972
on Adult Education